

# Constitutional Iconography

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Maximilian Steinbeis

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Over at [Hungarian Spectrum](#) Eva Balogh has much fun with a series of paintings commissioned by the Hungarian government commemorating various episodes from the recent magyar history.

You can often get a sense of what a regime is about by looking at the art they sponsor: Stalins sturdy tractorists spring to mind, or North Korea's "[mass games](#)".

Looking at Orban's choice the sense you get, beside aesthetic tooth-ache, is one of bewilderment: There is one picture dedicated to the memory of the demonstrations in 2006, where Fidesz loyalists clashed violently with the police under a socialist-liberal government. You see a policeman stabbing a white-clad angel-like virgin into the chest: Blunt enough, you think. But then again, the whole thing looks remarkably like St. George finishing off that dragon...

Exceedingly weird is the last picture of the series: It's about our favorite topic with respect to Hungary, the new [constitution](#).

You have St. Steven, naked but for his crown, his lower body disappearing in luminescent mist, mildly watching the scene from heaven above. He grabs a sword with his right hand, not at the grip, but at the blade, which ought to hurt like hell. With that sword he... well, he stabs the constitution lying in the middle, doesn't he?

You have people standing around it as if they were waiting for the bus, looking somewhat sleepy, most of them seem to have their eyes closed. St. Steven is also nearly asleep, by the way, but that might also be a clumsy way of putting an expression of gentle benevolence on his face, though.

The one person who at least is squinting is a uniformed young hussar who also has his sword drawn, pointing very pointily heavenwards. He has a contemptuous smirk in his face.

Then you have a fellow with a blond beard who carries something I can't quite make out, might be a humungous torch light.

You have ghostly white hands waving in the air, and a shape that looks like a bishop's hat.

There is not a single woman in the whole picture, aside from a pair of apparently female hands belonging to an invisible body outside the frame that seems to be putting a vase with a violet flower next to the constitution.

Very enigmatic, you have to give them that.

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